



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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April 5, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – THE HELP
GROUP, PROJECT SIX GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Project Six Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by The Help Group, Incorporated. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Project Six Group Home is a twenty-bed facility, which provides care for girls and boys ages 11-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Project Six Group Home was providing services for seven DCFS children and twelve privately placed children.

Project Six Group Home is located in the Third District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

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Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency needs to address a few deficient areas.

Project Six Group Home needs to replace missing window screens, maintain a full complement of linens and clean pillows on the children's bed, maintain current court authorizations and properly maintain medication logs for all children taking psychotropic medications.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MMO:MP:CC:dl

Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Dr. Barbara Firestone, Executive Director, The Help Group
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**The Help Group
Project Six Group Home
15339 Saticoy Street
Van Nuys, California 91406
Phone: (818) 267-2677
License Number: 197606825
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Project Six Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The grounds are clean and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Overall, children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings are in good repair; however, window screens are missing from bedrooms one, two, six, and seven. The mattresses are comfortable. However, there is a stained and dirty pillow on one of the beds in bedroom six, and the beds in bedroom seven do not have mattress pads and top sheets. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, TVs, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including computers with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

1. The Help Group management:

- a. Replace missing window screens.**
- b. Maintain clean pillows for all children.**
- c. Ensure that all beds have a full complement of linens.**

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II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist. However, one child does not have a current court authorization for one psychotropic medication he is taking.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Medication distribution logs do not document one child's psychotropic medication that he is taking.

Recommendations

2. The Help Group management:

- a. Maintain current court authorizations for all children taking psychotropic medications.**
- b. Maintain medication logs that document all psychotropic medications that children are taking.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment –Interviews with children

Sample size: Five

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

TO: Carla Carr, Children's Group Home Ombudsman
Los Angeles County, Department of Auditor-Controller

FROM: Project Six Group Home

RE: Corrective Action Plan for Audit –February 6, 2007

The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) has been implemented as follows for the Project Six Group Home located at 15339 Saticoy Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406.
(License # 197606825)

1 a. Recommendation

Replace missing window screens.

Corrective Action Plan

All missing windows screens have been replaced on March 2, 2007. Project Six Administrative Assistant will tour all grounds once a week to insure outside of building is in compliance and staff will record on a tracking sheet. Program Director will review tracking form on a monthly basis.

1 b. Recommendation

Maintain clean pillows for all children.

Corrective Action Plan

Soiled pillow was replaced by clean pillow on February 7, 2007. Staff will inspect pillows each week to make sure they are clean and in good repair. Staff will record on a tracking sheet. Program Director will review tracking form on a monthly basis.

1 c. Recommendation

Ensure that all beds have full complement of linens.

Corrective Action Plan

Mattress pads and flat sheets have been put in beds in bedroom 7 on February 7, 2007. Staff will check beds regularly to make sure beds have a full complement of linens. Staff will record on a tracking sheet. Program Director will review tracking form on a monthly basis.

V a. Recommendation

Maintain current court authorizations for all children taking psychotropic medications.

Corrective Action Plan

Administrative Assistant will check weekly that all medications are listed on court authorizations and will check with psychiatrist on a monthly basis that medications have been added or deleted as appropriate. Administrative Assistant will record on a tracking sheet. Program Director will review tracking form on a monthly basis.

V b. Recommendation

Maintain medication logs that document all psychotropic medications that children are taking.

Correction Action Plan

Nurse will audit medication logs on a monthly basis to insure that staff have initialed after administration of medications. Nurse will record on a tracking sheet at the end of each month. Nurse will document any discrepancies on the medication log tracking sheet. Program Director will review tracking form on a monthly basis.

Deborah Howard will be responsible for monitoring the correction plan.

Deborah Howard MPT 3/12/07
Executive Director Signature & Date